

### Harmonisation of survey data in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)

Scholz, Evi

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:  
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Scholz, E. (2005). Harmonisation of survey data in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). In J. H. P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, & J. Harkness (Eds.), *Methodological aspects in cross-national research* (pp. 183-200). Mannheim: GESIS-ZUMA. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-49158-7>

#### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Deposit-Lizenz (Keine Weiterverbreitung - keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

#### Terms of use:

This document is made available under Deposit Licence (No Redistribution - no modifications). We grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, individual and limited right to using this document. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

# HARMONISATION OF SURVEY DATA IN THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SURVEY PROGRAMME (ISSP)

*EVI SCHOLZ\**

The following article deals with harmonisation in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). We start with an introduction into the ISSP and its general concept of harmonisation, then go into harmonisation of the ISSP background variables and give some insights in presenting one major background variable and its construction. The article ends with some brief notes on the future development and prospects for the ISSP background variables.

## 1 The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)

The ISSP is a collaborative programme of cross-cultural social science survey research with currently 39 member countries (2004). Each individual ISSP member is responsible for funding and fielding its national ISSP study. The ISSP run an annual module on a topic important for social science research which changes from year to year and is replicated regularly (Scholz, Harkness & Klein, 2003). The ISSP questionnaire consists of two parts: a fixed set of substantive questions with 60 items and since ISSP 2002<sup>1</sup> a second part of obligatory socio-demographic (ISSP standard background) variables (Braun & Uher, 2003).

For the substantive part the ISSP applies the concept of input harmonisation: questions are developed, discussed and pretested before they are finally fielded in the ISSP-countries. Questions, answer categories and question order are fixed. Figure 1 illustrates the steps of development of the ISSP's substantive questions. The questionnaire development starts

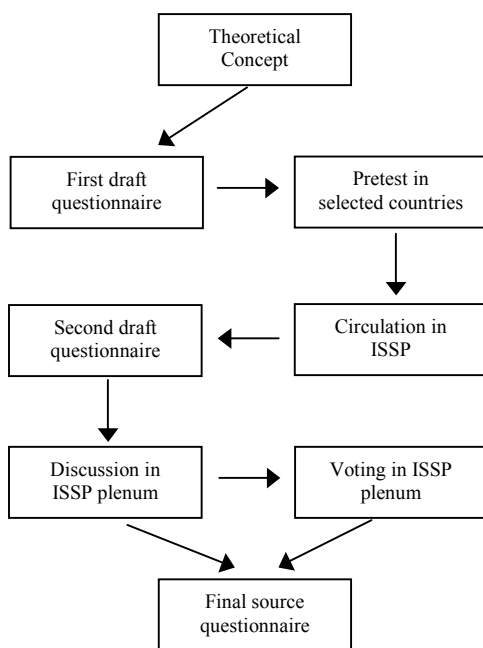
---

\* I am grateful for the comments from Natalia Garcia-Pardo from CIS, Spain and Kirstine Kolsrud from NSD, Norway regarding the Spanish and Norwegian data. All mistakes, of course, are on my liability.

1 The decision for this fixed set of obligatory background variables was taken in 2001, and came into force with the next following ISSP module.

with theoretical considerations on the topics which should be covered. A drafting group with several ISSP country members' delegates develop a first draft questionnaire which is usually pretested. The draft is circulated together with the pretest results in the whole ISSP for comments and suggestions. A second draft is then developed by the drafting group, discussed in detail at the plenary meeting (the annual general ISSP assembly) and then voted question-by-question using majority rule. The final ISSP source questionnaire results from the discussion and decision at the annual meeting. This questionnaire is then translated and fielded by the individual ISSP member countries.

**Figure 1**      **Input Harmonisation in the ISSP: Development of the ISSP Questionnaire with Substantive Questions**

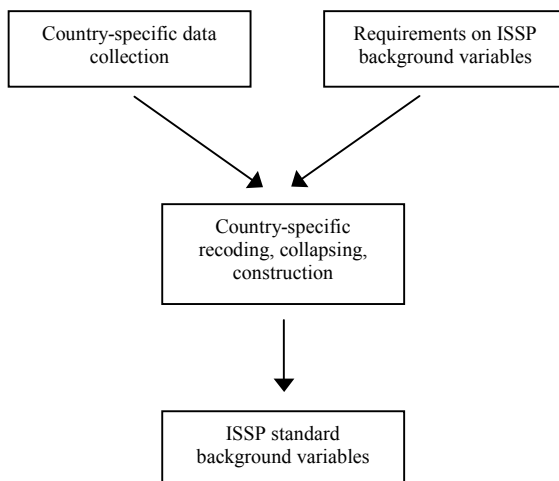


For the ISSP standard background variables a mixed mode approach of harmonisation is followed (see Figure 2): The ISSP has currently 34 background variables<sup>2</sup> (see Appendix 1).

---

2    33 variables are obligatory.

**Figure 2**      **Mixed Mode Harmonisation in the ISSP: ISSP Standard Background Variables**



These background variables have to be enclosed in all ISSP member countries' questionnaires. All background variables have fixed pre-defined categories which should be covered. But, on the other hand, there are no fixed rules how the individual ISSP members have to ask their background variables, and there is no fixed question wording nor question order. So the ISSP background variables are the result of a country-specific harmonisation process where the outcome variables are fixed in advance, especially by common categories valid for all ISSP member countries. A paper, mainly produced for internal ISSP use but publicly available<sup>3</sup> lists the ISSP standard background variables and gives some briefing how the ISSP standard background variables should be constructed.

These background variables include sex, age, marital status, religious denomination, a set of variables on the work status of the respondent and a few political background variables.

General problems for the quality of the ISSP background variables come from country-specific restrictions on asking questions, some of them result especially from the particularity that in several countries the ISSP is run together with larger established surveys which cannot change their time-series easily. In these countries ISSP background variables are

---

3 <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/bv2001.pdf>

taken from the larger surveys' background variables or are based on them (Braun & Uher, 2003: 36). Another drawback is that the documentation on background variables is not always as complete as desired. Both problems mostly come from the fact that for the ISSP there are no central funds, particularly not for data preparation or documentation. In the following we will focus on one of the major background variables and their construction in Germany<sup>4</sup>, Norway<sup>5</sup>, and Spain<sup>6</sup>. The presented variable – highest educational degree (DEGREE) – is taken from ISSP 2002: For the highest educational degree a scheme was developed to facilitate harmonisation of national educational degree (asked country-specifically) into the comparable highest level of educational achievement.

We will start with some general information on the harmonised variable DEGREE, its categories, the briefing given (see Table 1; taken from the guidelines on background variables<sup>7</sup>) and then go into the details of construction.

Education, it goes without saying, can be measured in different ways, but as a comparable measure, not all of them are quite satisfactory: Years of schooling, e.g., produces problems of comparability since the number of school years to achieve a certain qualification is different across countries; additional problems occur in comparing education if some countries allow for repetition of classes, and others don't follow that concept. The ISSP therefore decided to include a variable on education using the country-specific and detailed categories to get the highest educational level and then recode it into a common ISSP educational classification. The final categories of the harmonised variable run from no formal qualification over the lowest formal qualification attainable to a completed university degree. Guidelines on the measurement of education in international projects and details on educational systems and the country-specific classification of education are collected for the ISSP, and are freely available for interested researchers<sup>8</sup>.

---

4 ISSP 2002 in Germany was fielded with ALLBUS 2002: ISSP substantive questions were included in a self completion questionnaire which should be filled in by the respondents with interviewer attendance; the socio-demographic variables were mostly taken or constructed from ALLBUS which was done as CAPI. In the following tables for Germany, the data of the two German subsamples (eastern and western) are collapsed and weighted to adjust the relative size of the two subsamples to an overall representative German sample.

5 ISSP 2002 in Norway was part of a larger mail survey with ISSP at start.

6 Stand alone, face to face.

7 See [http://www.gesis.org/en/data\\_service/issp/rules/background\\_vars.htm](http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/issp/rules/background_vars.htm)

8 Attachment to the codebook of ISSP 1995: <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s2880app.pdf>.

**Table 1** ISSP Highest Educational Degree

Harmonised background variable	DEGREE
Label of harmonised background variable	R: Education II: categories
Briefing on construction	Education II – highest education level / degree- The DEGREE of education should be ASKED country-specific, NOT using the ISSP categories in the questions to the respondents. These ISSP categories should be computed from the country-specific degrees (nat_DEGREE)
Categories	0. No formal qualification 1. Lowest formal qualification attainable 2. Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed) 3. (Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.) 4. Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree 5. University degree completed 9. No answer

Table 2 presents results for the harmonised variable for Germany, Norway and Spain. In the left column the harmonised ISSP categories from Table 1 are repeated, on the right hand side the corresponding frequency distributions for the selected countries are presented. This summary table already shows a possible problem with the lowest category (without formal qualification) since for Norway there are no respondents in that category. The explanation for that Norwegian peculiarity will be given when the variable is deconstructed into their national sources.

**Table 2** Highest Educational Degree in ISSP 2002

DEGREE	Germany in % (n=1367)	Norway in % (n=1475)	Spain in % (n=2471)
No formal qualification	3.9	—	12.3
Lowest formal qualification attainable	35.9	10.1	25.0
Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed)	32.1	17.0	26.9
(Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.)	9.3	34.8	20.1
Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree	6.6	11.5	7.5
University degree completed	12.0	26.1	7.9
NA, DK	0.3	0.5	0.3

Source: ISSP 2002, own calculation.

In Germany, the school system is a hierarchical one, where pupils are selected at a quite young age into different kinds of secondary schools (Anweiler, 1996; KMK, 2005). The German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) asks two questions on education, one on the highest general educational attainment, and another one on vocational education and the degree achieved (for full question wording, see Appendix 2). The use of the latter for the construction of DEGREE is necessary since university degree is not asked as school degree but as terminating vocational training. These two variables are combined to one German educational degree variable (also included as obligatory variable D\_DEGR in the international ISSP data set): In a first step the answer categories of the question on general educational attainment are collapsed. In a second step respondents reporting a polytechnic or a university degree are coded into two extra categories. Information about other vocational training is not taken into account. Table 3 gives the construction scheme for educational degree in Germany.

**Table 3 From German Degree to ISSP Degree (ISSP 2002)**

National Degree (D_DEGR)				Recode	ISSP DEGREE	
Educational level	German Code	German Categories	English Translation		ISSP Code	ISSP Categories
General	1	Noch Schüler	Still at school	→	0	No formal qualification
General	2	Schule beendet ohne Abschluss	Left school without qualification			
General	3	Volks-/ Hauptschulabschluss, Polytechnische Oberschule (8./9. Klasse)	Lowest formal qualification of German tripartite secondary school system, after 8 or 9 years of schooling	→	1	Lowest formal qualification
General	4	Mittlere Reife, Realschulabschluss, Polytechnische Oberschule (10. Klasse)	Intermediary secondary qualification, after 10 years of schooling	→	2	Above lowest qualification
General	5	Fachhochschulreife	Certificate fulfilling entrance requirements to study at a polytechnic college			
General	6	Abitur bzw. Erweiterte Oberschule (12. Klasse) (Hochschulreife)	Higher qualification, entitling holders to study at a university	→	3	Higher secondary completed
Vocational	7	Fachhochschulabschluss (auch Abschluss einer Ingenieurschule)	Polytechnic degree (or engineering college degree)	→	4	Above higher secondary level but below full university degree
Vocational	8	Hochschulabschluss	University degree	→	5	University degree completed
General	9	anderer Schulabschluss	Other general educational qualification	→	9	NA

Table adapted from: <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s2880app.pdf>

Table 4 shows the corresponding frequency distribution of the harmonised variable DEGREE based on the German combined educational degree variable. Recoding the German highest educational attainment into ISSP educational level fits quite well. The only problem is how to deal with persons where school is not finished at the time of the interview (highlighted in the table). Since respondents are aged 18 and above, usually persons have finished their compulsory education (starting from an age of 6 and ending after 9 or ten classes). So, the respondents “still at school”<sup>9</sup> might include a few cases who could probably be coded into one of the higher categories, e.g., those having passed the 12th class of the German Gymnasium and therefore being equivalent to having a certificate to study at a polytechnic college. But given the low number of persons, the mistake produced here might be negligible. So, the harmonized ISSP variable on highest educational degree for Germany might slightly overrepresent those in the “no formal qualification”-category.

**Table 4 Highest Educational Degree in Germany and German ISSP; 2002**

German Educational Level	ALLBUS in %	ISSP Category on Highest Educational Degree	ISSP in %
Still at school	1.1	No formal qualification	3.9
Finished school without school leaving certificate	2.8		
Lowest formal qualification of Germany's tripartite secondary school system, after 8 or 9 years of schooling	35.9	Lowest formal qualification attainable	35.9
Intermediary secondary qualification, after 10 years of schooling	27.7	Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed)	32.1
Certificate fulfilling entrance requirements to study at a polytechnic college	4.4		
Higher qualification, entitling holders to study at a university	9.3	(Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.)	9.3
Polytechnic degree (or engineering college degree)	6.6	Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree	6.6
University degree	12.0	University degree completed	12.0
NA, DK	0.3	NA, DK	0.3

Source: ISSP 2002, n=1367, own calculation.

9 Still at school: n=15 or 1.1 %; thereof 4 are not born in Germany and immigrated between 1990 and 1995; 2 of the 15 pupils reported that they are less than half time employed. No further information on type of school.



During the last decades, the Norwegian school system has experienced profound reforms, new educational institutions have been founded and others previously existing have been changed. Vocational and academic educational programmes have been integrated into one system. The number of years in compulsory education has increased from 7 years to 10 years nowadays. Access to higher education is usually obtained by a three-year course of upper secondary education, either general or vocational. Higher education in Norway is provided at colleges or universities, some higher educational programmes last one to three years but the degree programmes take three to seven years, in general. In the pre-reform system, persons with university degree started their educational career with a compulsory primary school, then attended a not compulsory lower secondary school (*realskole*), followed by a *gymnas* at upper secondary level and university studies. Persons without academic interests after completed primary education were prepared for vocational training in the so-called continuation school (*framhaldsskole*) followed by job training (Aakvik, Salvanes & Vaage, 2003; Eurydice, 2003a; ISSP, 1995; Statistics Norway, 2003).

The highest educational level is constructed from three separate questions; the first one on general education, a second one on vocational and a third one on higher education (for full question wording, see Appendix 2) covering different educational backgrounds of different ages groups. These three variables are combined into one Norwegian educational degree variable (named N\_DEGR and included in the international data set). Table 5 gives the construction scheme.

Table 6 shows the corresponding frequency distribution of the harmonised variable DEGREE based on the Norwegian combined educational degree variable and demonstrates where the empty category of the harmonised variable comes from: The, at first glance, missing respondents with no formal qualification result from the Norwegian educational system where pupils automatically move from one class to the next during their primary education<sup>10</sup>. So dropouts are not expected to occur or if, then only in small numbers.

The Spanish educational system has experienced basic changes in the post-Franco years. Until 1970, school education in Spain was influenced by the *Ley Moyano* a more than one hundred years old legal regulating where, for example, elementary education was offered for children between 6 and 9 years and charged with fees (Goetze, 1996: 213). With the educational reform process starting in 1970, education becomes as a public issue, where general and vocational education is obligatory and without fees.

---

10 During the first and second stage of primary education, there is no formal assessment. In the third stage of primary education, marks for each subject based on the teachers' assessment are awarded twice a year. But promotion to the next grade is automatic (Eurydice, 2003a).

**Table 5 From Norwegian Degree to ISSP Degree (ISSP 2002)**

Educational Level	National Degree (questionnaire categories and N_DEGR)					Recode		ISSP DEGREE	
	Norwegian Questionnaire Categories	English Translation	Recode	N_DEGREE Categories	N_DEGREE E_Code			ISSP Code	ISSP Categories
General					-			0	No formal qualification
General	7-årig folkeskole eller kortere	Elementary education completed (compulsory, 7 years or less)	↗↘	Primary completed	1	↗	↘	1	Lowest formal qualification
General	9-eller 10-årig grunnskole	Basic compulsory education completed (9 or 10 years)							
Vocational	Grunnutdanning ved yrkesskole, videregående skole	Secondary vocational incomplete (education at vocational or secondary school)	↗	Secondary vocational incomplete	2				
General	Framhaldsskole eller fortsattseleesskole	Secondary academic incomplete (secondary school)	↗↘↙	Secondary academic incomplete	3	↗	↘	2	Above lowest qualification
General	Realskole eller middelskole	Secondary academic incomplete (intermediary secondary school)							
General	Folkehøgskole	Secondary academic incomplete (high school, not leading to an academic degree)							
Vocational	Fagbrev eller fullført fagutdanning ved yrkesskole, handelsskole, yrkesfag ved videregående skole	Secondary vocational completed (certificate of apprenticeship or technical education completed, business school, vocational education at secondary school completed)	↗	Secondary vocational completed	4	↗	↘	3	Higher secondary completed
General	Eksamen artium, økonomisk gymnas eller 3-årig videregående skole med generell studekompetanse	Secondary academic completed (high school degree, economic high school, or 3-years secondary school with general entry requirement for university)	↗	Secondary academic completed	5				
Higher	Ofentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av mindre enn 1 års varighet	Publicly approved university less than 1 year	↗	University, college < 1 year	6	↗	↘	4	Above higher secondary level but below full university degree
Higher	Ofentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 1-2 års normert varighet	Publicly approved university 1-2 years	↗	University, college 1-2 years	7				
Higher	Ofentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 3-4 års normert varighet	Publicly approved university 3-4 years	↗	University, college 3-4 years	8	↗	↘	5	University degree completed
Higher	Ofentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 5 års normert varighet eller mer	Publicly approved university 5 years or more		University, college >= 5 years	9				
	Not included in questionnaire			NA, DK	99			9	NA

Table adapted from: <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s2880app.pdf>

Higher education is offered at universities, technical colleges (length of studies 5-6 years) or at higher polytechnic schools comparable to the German *Fachhochschulen* for the education of primary school teachers, translators, opticians, etc.<sup>11</sup> (length of studies 3 years). University education is organised in three cycles, a first basic one of three years, a second one of two additional years with degree *licenciatura* and doctoral studies as the third cycle (Eurydice, 2003b; Goetze, 1996).

**Table 6 Highest Educational Degree in Norway and Norwegian ISSP; 2002**

Norwegian Educational Level	Norway in %	ISSP Highest Educational Degree	ISSP in %
—	—	No formal qualification	—
Primary completed	10.1	Lowest formal qualification attainable	10.1
Secondary vocational incomplete	6.8	Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed)	17.0
Secondary academic incomplete	10.2		
Secondary vocational completed	17.2	(Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.)	34.8
Secondary academic completed	17.7		
University college < 1 year	2.8	Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree	11.5
University college 1-2 years	8.7		
University college 3-4 years	16.9	University degree completed	26.1
University college ≥ 5 years	9.2		
NA, DK	0.5	NA, DK	0.5

Source: ISSP 2002, n=1475, own calculation.

Since Spaniards born during the time of the *Ley Moyano* and those born in the post-Franco time were educated in different educational systems, Spanish researchers have to deal with those different educational histories. Hence, in Spain, education is also asked very detailed. The first question is on school attendance in general (whether the respondent is illiterate, didn't attend school but is able to read or write or attended school), the second one asks the highest level, specifying the grade and the name of the studies fin-

11 Architects and engineers educated for three years in polytechnic schools achieve a different degree from those educated in technical colleges.

ished. The third question is on the number of years of official schooling (for full question wording, see Appendix 2). The information achieved is then coded by the Spanish research team. The outcome is stored in a Spanish educational degree variable (named E\_DEGR, for full wording, Appendix 2) and serves as the base for the construction of DEGREE presented in Tables 7 and 8.

As the frequency distribution shows, the number of people without completed primary education is quite high resulting from the influence of the pre 1970 school education in Spain which effects the educational level of many Spaniards (Goetze 1996: 213).

**Table 7 From Spanish Degree to ISSP Degree (ISSP 2002)**

National Degree (E_DEGR)			Recode	ISSP DEGREE	
Spanish Code	Spanish Categories	English Translation		ISSP Code	ISSP Categories
1	Ninguna <sup>12</sup>	None		0	No formal qualification
2	Educación básica incompleta	Incomplete primary school			
3	Educación básica completa	Primary school completed		1	Lowest formal qualification
4	Educación secundaria incompleta	Incomplete secondary school		2	Above lowest qualification
5	Formación profesional I y enseñanzas técnico-profesionales equivalentes	Basic level of vocational education			
6	Educación secundaria completa	Secondary school		3	Higher secondary completed
7	Formación profesional II y equivalentes	Secondary level of vocational education			
8	Arquitecto e ingeniero técnico	Technical architecture & engineering		4	Above higher secondary level but below full university degree
9	Estudios universitarios incompletos	3 years university			
10	Arquitecto e Ingeniero Superior	Architecture and engineering academic		5	University degree completed
11	Carrera universitaria completa, Licenciatura	College or university first degree			
12	Estudios de Postgrado o especialización	PhD, other official degree			
99	N.C.	NA, DK		9	NA

12 Either illiterate or no school attendance, but able to read or write.

**Table 8 Highest Educational Degree in Spain and Spanish ISSP; 2002**

Spanish Educational Level	Spain in %	ISSP Highest Educational Degree	ISSP in %
None	6.8	No formal qualification <sup>13</sup>	12.3
Incomplete primary school	5.5		
Primary school completed	25.0	Lowest formal qualification attainable	25.0
Incomplete secondary school	22.1	Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed)	26.9
Basic level of vocational education	4.7		
Secondary school	13.3	(Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.)	20.1
Secondary level of vocational education	6.8		
Technical architecture & engineering	1.5	Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree	7.5
3 years university	6.1		
Architecture & engineering academic	1.0		
College or university first degree	5.4	University degree completed	7.9
PhD, other official degree	1.5		
NA, DK	0.3	NA, DK	0.3

Source: ISSP 2002, n=2471, own calculation.

To conclude, to measure formal school education, DEGREE is one of the well-constructed ISSP background variables and does not produce remarkable problems. Special efforts have been made to develop guidelines, to design the variable and to document the bridges from the national educational variables to the harmonised ISSP variable.

## 2 Conclusion and Prospects

Harmonisation of variables in cross-national surveys is always a demanding enterprise and a compromise. In a sense the harmonisation of background variables is also a puzzle which fits more or less well. The ISSP asks background variables which are well constructed but also others which might produce problems in terms of comparability. The experiences from ISSP 2002, the first ISSP module applying the ISSP standard background variables, have resulted in an ISSP internal review process to improve the quality of the ISSP background variables. In a first step, all ISSP members were asked to send comments on the ISSP demographic variables to its demographic methods work group (DMG) to get insights where the ISSP member countries themselves feel there is potential for modifications, changes, replacements or even cuts of variables. All comments were collected and put together in a report which includes the DMG's recommendations based

13 About 78 % of respondents without formal qualification are aged 60 and above.

on the ISSP's member reaction. The report was circulated at the end of 2004 and needs to be discussed during the next months. A next step of a probably long-lasting discussion and decision-making process might be a complete documentation of the ISSP background variables and their construction in each individual member country. Such a detailed documentation is a necessary pre-condition for quality assessment and, in a more distant future, for a modification of the obligatory ISSP standards on its demographic variables. For established national surveys, any changes of institutionalised procedures, questions and variables are difficult where a time-series would be interrupted. The difficulties for change, of course, increase in international survey programmes such as the ISSP, where several countries run the ISSP together with its General Social Survey (such as Australia, Great Britain, Germany, Poland or the USA) and with more than half of all countries delivering ISSP data fielded together with a larger survey (Klein & Harkness, 2004).

## References

- Aakvik, A., K. G. Salvanes, and K. Vaage. 2003. *Measuring Heterogeneity in the Returns to Education in Norway Using Educational Reforms*, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Department of Economics, Discussion Paper 26/2002. <http://www.nhh.no/sam/res&publ/2002/dp26.pdf> (23.3.2005).
- Anweiler, O. 1996. „Deutschland.“ S. 13-30 in *Bildungssysteme in Europa. Entwicklung und Struktur des Bildungswesens in zehn Ländern: Deutschland, England, Frankreich, Italien, Niederlande, Polen, Rußland, Schweden, Spanien, Türkei*, herausgegeben von O. Anweiler et al. 4. revised edition. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag.
- Braun, M., and P. Ph. Mohler. 2003. „Background Variables.” Pp. 101-115 in *Cross-cultural Survey Methods*, edited by J. A. Harkness, F. J. R. De Vijver and P. Ph. Mohler. Hoboken. N. J.: John Wiley & Sons.
- Braun, M., and R. Uher. 2003. “The ISSP and its Approach to Background Variables.” Pp. 33-47 in *Advances in Cross-National Comparison*, edited by Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, J. H.P., and C. Wolf. New York: Kluwer 2003.
- Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, J. H.P., and C. Wolf (Eds.). 2003. *Advances in Cross-national Comparison*. New York: Kluwer Academic, Plenum Publishers.
- Eurydice. 2003a. *Structures of Education, Vocational Training, and Adult Education, Systems in Europe*. Norway 2003, information provided by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, Eurydice Unit. <http://www.eurydice.org> (28.01.2005).
- Eurydice. 2003b. *Structures of Education, Vocational Training, and Adult Education, Systems in Europe*. Spain 2003, information provided by Eurydice Unit, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport CIDE-Centro de Investigación y Documentación. <http://www.eurydice.org> (28.01.2005).

- Goetze, D. 1996. „Spanien“. S. 213-230 in *Bildungssysteme in Europa. Entwicklung und Struktur des Bildungswesens in zehn Ländern: Deutschland, England, Frankreich, Italien, Niederlande, Polen, Rußland, Schweden, Spanien, Türkei*, herausgegeben von O. Anweiler et al. 4. revised edition. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag.
- Harkness, J. and M. Blohm. 2004. “German General Social Survey 2002, English Translation of the ALLBUS Questionnaire.” *ZUMA-Methodenbericht 2004/3*.  
<http://www.gesis.org/Dauerbeobachtung/Allbus/documents/pdfs/GGSSquest2002.pdf> (16.12.2004).
- ISSP. 1995. *Codebook*. Appendix. <http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/issp/codebooks/s2880app.pdf> (17.3.2005).
- Klein, S. and J. Harkness. 2004. “ISSP Study Monitoring 2002. Report to the ISSP General Assembly on monitoring work undertaken for the ISSP by ZUMA, Germany.” *ZUMA Methodenbericht 2004/10*.
- KMK 2005. *Das Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2002. Darstellung der Kompetenzen, Strukturen und bildungspolitischen Entwicklungen für den Informationsaustausch in Europa*, herausgegeben vom Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn.  
[http://www.kmk.org/dossier/dossier\\_2002/dossier\\_2002\\_dt\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/dossier/dossier_2002/dossier_2002_dt_ebook.pdf) (28.01.2005).
- Norway. 2005. *Norway, the official site in the United States*. <http://www.norway.org> (17.3.2005).
- Scholz, E., J. Harkness, and S. Klein. 2003. “ISSP 2002 Germany, Family and Changing Gender Roles III, ZUMA Report on the German Study.” *ZUMA Methodenbericht 2003/15*.
- Statistics Norway. 2003. *Norwegian Standard Classification of Education, Revised 2000*.  
[http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/04/90/nos\\_c751\\_en/nos\\_c751\\_en.pdf](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/04/90/nos_c751_en/nos_c751_en.pdf) (28.01.2005).

## Appendix 1 ISSP Standard Background Variables

SEX	Sex of respondent
AGE	Age of respondent
MARITAL	Marital status of respondent
COHAB	Do you live together with a partner?
EDUCYRS	Education I – years (of full time) schooling
DEGREE	Education II – highest education level / degree
nat_DEGR	Education II – country specific categories
WRKST	Current employment status, main source of living
WRKHRS	Working hours – number of hours (usually) worked weekly <i>(including regular overtime work)</i>
ISCO88	Occupation – four digit 1988 ISCO / ILO occupation code <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
WRKSUP	Supervises others at work – Do you supervise the work of any other people? <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
WRKTYPE	R: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
NEMPLOY	(If self employed) Do you have any employees? If so, how many? <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
UNION	Is respondent member of a trade union <i>(or was in the past)?</i>
SPWRKST	Spouse / partner: current employment status, main source of living
SPISCO88	Spouse / partner: occupation, four digit 1988 ISCO / ILO occupation code <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
SPWRKTYP	S-P: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed <i>(if R not working ask most recent job)</i>
INCOME	Family income
RINCOME	Respondent's earnings
HOMPOP	How many persons in household
HHCYCLE	Household composition: adults and children (less than 18 years)
PARTY_LR	Party affiliation – left-right <i>(Not asked but coded in a 5-point left - right scheme by data producers)</i>
nat_PRTY	Party affiliation – Country-specific
VOTE_LE	Vote last general election: Yes/no
ATTEND	Attendance of religious services
RELIG	Religious denomination <i>(asked country-specific but re-coded to standard)</i>
RELIGGRP	Religious main-group derived from RELIG
TOPBOT	10 point top-bottom scale
nat_REG	Region – Country-specific
nat_SIZE	Size of community – Country-specific
URBRURAL	Type of community: urban / rural – self-assessed
WEIGHT	Weighting factor
MODE	Administrative mode of data-collection
nat_ETHN (optional)	Ethnic identity / family origin <i>(Country specific)</i>



## Appendix 2 Original Question Wording and their English Translation

(Instructions in italics)

DEGREE: German Question Wording, Original	DEGREE: German Question Wording, English Translation
<p>S3 INT: <i>Liste S 3 vorlegen!</i>  Als nächstes kommen jetzt Fragen zu Ihrer Ausbildung, Ihrem Beruf und Ihrer Familie.  Beginnen wir mit Ihrer Ausbildung:  Welchen allgemeinbildenden Schulabschluss haben Sie?  INT: <i>Nur höchsten Schulabschluss angeben lassen!</i>  1: A Noch Schüler  2: B Schule beendet ohne Abschluss  3: C Volks-/ Hauptschulabschluss bzw. Polytechnische Oberschule mit Abschluss 8. oder 9. Klasse  4: D Mittlere Reife, Realschulabschluss bzw. Polytechnische Oberschule mit Abschluss 10. Klasse  5: E Fachhochschulreife (Abschluss einer Fachoberschule etc.)  6: F Abitur bzw. Erweiterte Oberschule mit Abschluss 12. Klasse (Hochschulreife)  7: G Anderen Schulabschluss, und zwar _____  9 Keine Angabe</p>	<p>S3 INT: <i>Please display card S3!</i>  Next we come to questions about your education, job and family.  Let's begin with your education.  What general school leaving certificate do you have?  INT: <i>Please request highest school leaving certificate only</i>  1 A Still at school  2 B Finished school without school leaving certificate  3 C Lowest formal qualification of Germany's tripartite secondary school system, after 8 or 9 years of schooling  4 D Intermediary secondary qualification, after 10 years of schooling  5 E Certificate fulfilling entrance requirements to study at a polytechnic college  6 F Higher qualification, entitling holders to study at a university  7 G Other school leaving certificate, _____  9 No answer</p>
<p>S4_j / S4_k (nicht für Schüler) INT: <i>Liste S 4 vorlegen!</i>  Welchen beruflichen Ausbildungsabschluss haben Sie?  Was von dieser Liste trifft auf Sie zu?  Nennen Sie mir bitte die entsprechenden Kennbuchstaben.  INT: <i>Mehrfachnennungen möglich, außer wenn „M“ genannt</i>  01 A Beruflich-betriebliche Anlernzeit mit Abschlusszeugnis, aber keine Lehre  02 B Teilfacharbeiterabschluss  03 C Abgeschlossene gewerbliche oder landwirtschaftliche Lehre  04 D Abgeschlossene kaufmännische Lehre  05 E Berufliches Praktikum, Volontariat  06 F Berufsfachschulabschluss  07 G Fachschulabschluss  08 H Meister-, Techniker- oder gleichwertiger Fachschulabschluss  09: J Fachhochschulabschluss (auch Abschluss einer Ingenieurschule)*  10: K Hochschulabschluss*  11: L Anderen beruflichen Ausbildungsabschluss, und zwar...  12: M Keinen beruflichen Ausbildungsabschluss</p>	<p>S4_j / S4_k (if not still at school) INT: <i>Please display list S4!</i>  What vocational or professional training do you have?  Which of the categories on the card apply to you?  Please name the appropriate letter(s).  INT: <i>Multiple responses possible, unless "M" selected.</i>  01 A On-the-job vocational training with final certificate, but not within traineeship or apprenticeship scheme  02 B Compact vocational training course  03 C Completed trades/crafts or agricultural traineeship  04 D Completed commercial traineeship  05 E Work placement/internship  06 F Technical or vocational college certificate  07 G Specialized vocational college certificate  08 H Master(craftsman), technician or equivalent college certificate  09 J Polytechnic degree (or engineering college degree)*  10 K University degree*  11 L Other vocational training certificate, please enter  12. M No completed vocational training</p>

\* Items used for the construction of DEGREE in Germany

Translations by Sylvia Hönig, taken from Harkness & Blohm (2004)

## Appendix 2 (continued)

<b>DEGREE: Norwegian Question Wording, Original</b>	<b>DEGREE: Norwegian Question Wording, English Translation</b>
<p>70. Hvilken allmennutdanning har du fullført? <i>Kun ett kryss mulig</i> 7-årig folkeskole eller kortere</p> <p>Framhaldsskole eller fortselsesskole 9- eller 10-årig grunnskole Realskole eller middelskole</p> <p>Folkehøgskole<sup>14</sup></p> <p>Eksamen artium, økonomisk gymnas eller 3-årig videregående skole med generell studiekompetanse</p>	<p>What kind of general education have you completed? <i>Please tick</i> Elementary education completed (compulsory, 7 years or less) Secondary academic incomplete (secondary school) Basic compulsory education completed (9 or 10 years) Secondary academic incomplete (intermediary secondary school) Secondary academic incomplete (high school, not leading to an academic degree) Secondary academic completed (high school degree, economic high school, or 3-years secondary school with general entry requirement for university)</p>
<p>71. Hvilken yrkesutdanning har du fullført? <i>Kun ett kryss mulig</i> Ingen Grunnutdanning ved yrkesskole, videregående skole</p> <p>Fagbrev eller fullført fagutdanning ved yrkesskole, handelsskole, yrkesfag ved videregående skole</p>	<p>What is the highest vocational education that have you completed? <i>Please tick</i> None Secondary vocational incomplete (education at vocational or secondary school) Secondary vocational completed (certificate of apprenticeship or technical education completed, business school, vocational education at secondary school completed)</p>
<p>72. Hvilken høyere utdanning har du fullført? <i>Kun ett kryss mulig</i> Ingen Offentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av mindre enn 1 års varighet Offentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 1-2 års normert varighet Offentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 3-4 års normert varighet Offentlig godkjent høyskole eller universitet av 5 års normert varighet eller mer</p>	<p>What is the highest education at university/college that have you completed? <i>Please tick</i> None Publicly approved university less than 1 year Publicly approved university 1-2 years Publicly approved university 3-4 years Publicly approved university 5 years or more</p>

---

14 Folkehøgskole (Folk high school) are mostly run by private organisations, offer an overall educational programme to develop individual, social and academic skills. Folk high schools do not conduct formal exams. They are mostly attended by young adults having completed their upper secondary education, especially by those looking for a transitional year (source: Norway (2005), Norway, the official site in the United States, <http://www.norway.org>).

## Appendix 2 (concluded)

<b>DEGREE: Spanish Question Wording, Original</b>	<b>DEGREE: Spanish Question Wording, English Translation</b>
P26 ¿Ha ido Ud. a la escuela o cursado algún tipo de estudios? (ENTREVISTADOR: EN CASO NEGATIVO, PREGUNTAR SI SABE LEER Y ESCRIBIR). No. Es analfabeto No, pero sabe leer y escribir Sí, ha ido a la escuela N.C.	Have you attended school or taken any kind of courses? (Interviewer: if negative, ask whether R can read and write) No, R is illiterate No, but able to read and write Yes, R attended school NA
P26a. ¿Cuáles son los estudios de más alto nivel oficial que Ud. ha cursado (con independencia de que los haya terminado o no)? Por favor, especifique lo más posible, diciéndome el curso en que estaba cuando los terminó (o los interrumpió), y también el nombre que tenían entonces esos estudios. (ej: 3 años de Estudios Primarios, Primaria, 5º de Bachillerato, Maestría Industrial, Preuniversitario, 4º de EGB, Licenciatura, Doctorado, FP1, etc.). (ENTREVISTADOR: SI AÚN ESTÁ ESTUDIANDO, ANOTAR EL ÚLTIMO CURSO QUE HAYA COMPLETADO. SI NO HA COMPLETADO LA PRIMARIA, ANOTAR Nº DE AÑOS QUE ASISTIÓ A LA ESCUELA). CURSO... NOMBRE (de los estudios)... NIVEL (Codificar según T. ESTDUIOS)... P26b. ¿Cuántos años estuvo Ud. escolarizado o cursando estudios oficiales a los que dedicara la jornada completa? ...años Todavía está estudiando (colegio/instituto) Todavía está estudiando (universidad) No recuerda N.C.	What is the highest level of schooling you have ever taken (independent of whether you finished theses studies or not)? Please specify as much as possible, telling me the grade you were in when you finished (or interrupted) and the name of the schooling level . (i.e., 3 years of primary school, Primary School, 5th grade of high school, College Degree, etc) (Interviewer: if still studying, write down the last completed course. If primary not completed, write down number of years in school)  Grade (first, second, third course etc) Name (of studies) Level (Code according ...) How many years of full-time official schooling did you attend? ...years Still studying (high school) Still studying (college, university) Don't remember NA

## Outcome of detailed questions in Spain

<b>Spanish Educational Level, Original</b>	<b>Spanish Educational Level, English Translation</b>
Ninguna Educación básica incompleta Educación básica completa Educación secundaria incompleta Formación profesional I y enseñanzas técnico-profesionales equivalentes Educación secundaria completa Formación profesional II y equivalentes Arquitecto e ingeniero técnico Estudios universitarios incompletos Arquitecto e Ingeniero Superior Carrera universitaria completa, Licenciatura Doctorate, other official graduate degrees	None Incomplete primary school Primary school completed Incomplete secondary school Basic level of vocational education  Secondary school Secondary level of vocational education Technical architecture & engineering 3 years university Architecture and engineering academic College or university first degree PhD, other official degree